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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV CY SY

SUBJECT: CYPRUS CONDEMNS ALLEGED U.S. RAID IN EASTERN SYRIA

Classified By: DCM Jonathan Cohen, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) Via a press release and posting on its web site, the Cypriot Foreign Ministry on October 31 condemned the alleged U.S. raid on Al Qaeda Iraq targets in eastern Syria. Text of the message follows:

"The Government of the Republic of Cyprus wishes to extend its deepest condolences to the families of the innocent victims of the raid of US helicopters against a farm in Abu Kamal on the 26th of October 2008. Any acts against the territorial integrity of states in the Middle East are condemnable and hinder the prospects of peace and stability in the wider region. Cyprus underlines the importance of the adherence to the universal principles of the UN Charter, which safeguards the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the Member States of the UN."

¶2. (C) COMMENT: Traditionally warm relations between Syria and Cyprus have been strained of late, owing primarily to the establishment and continuing operation of ferry service between Latakeia and Famagusta, in the "Turkish-occupied" north of Cyprus. The RoC has sent high-level envoys to Damascus in attempts to end this service, so far without success. In this far forward-leaning condemnation of alleged U.S. operations in eastern Syria, Cyprus may be attempting to curry favor with the Bashar regime.

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